(c) The time-frame and financial allocations for the projects are being worked out.

Review meetings of Panchayati Raj System

†1710. SHRI DILIP SINGH JUDEV: Will the Minister of PANCHAYATI RAJ be pleased to state:

(a) the names of the Ministers whose meetings were called by the Central Government during the year 2003-06 for reviewing the Panchayati Raj System alongwith the dates of these meetings;

(b) the details of the decisions taken mainly in these meetings;

(c) the details of the decisions out of the above which could not be implemented, and -

(d) the details of assessment of the success of the Panchayati Raj in Chhattisgarh?

THE MINISTER OF PANCHAYATI RAJ (SHRI MANI SHANKAR AIYAR): (a) and (b) The Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up on 27 May, 2004. Prior to creation of the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, a conference of State Ministers of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj was held on 27th and 28th January, 2003 under the auspices of Ministry of Rural Development. In this conference the States were urged to ensure speedy devolution of funds, functions and functionaries and empower the Gram Sabhas. After the Ministry of Panchayati Raj was set up, a Conference of Chief Ministers and State Ministers in charge of rural development and Panchayati Raj on "Poverty Alleviation and Rural Prosperity through Panchayati Raj" was organized in New Delhi on 29-30 June 2004, jointly by the Ministry of Rural Development and the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. Issues relating to effective implementation of Part IX and IX A of the Constitution on Panchayati Raj were tabled as the agenda for discussions by the Ministry of Panchayati Raj. In this Conference, a decision was taken to hold seven Round Table Conferences to formulate a draft action plan towards achieving the objective of strengthening Panchayati Raj Institutions to enable them to emerge as institutions of self-government for the planning and implementation of programmes of economic development and social justice as envisioned in the Constitution.

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

The Ministry of Panchayati Raj convened seven Round Table Meetings with the State Ministers in charge of Panchayati Raj between July, 2004 and December, 2004. A set of around 150 action points was evolved by consensus and adopted unanimously at the conclusion of the last Round Table in Jaipur in December, 2004. Consultative mechanisms have been set up by the Government of India and State Governments to follow up the Round Table Conferences which comprise a Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj under the Chairmanship of the Union Minister for Panchayati Raj and a Committee of Chief Secretaries of States and Panchayati Raj Secretaries under the Chairmanship of the Union Secretary (Panchayati Raj).

Details of the Round Table Conferences and other meetings of Ministry of Panchayati Raj with the Ministers for reviewing the Panchayati Raj System are as follows:

Meetings	Invitees	Date	Location	Details of decisions/ discussions in these meetings
First Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	24th and 25th July, 2004	Kolkata	Effective devolution comprising functions, functionaries and finances as well as Gram Sabhas
Second Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	28th and 29th August, 2004	Mysore	Planning and implementation including the question of parallel bodies, Rural Business Hubs
Third Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	23rd and 24th September, 2004	Raipur	Reservations in Panchayati Raj comprising Scheduled Tribes (including implementation of PESA), Scheduled Castes and Women
Fourth Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	7th and 8th October, 2004	Chandigarh	Panchayati Raj in Union Territories and Panchayati Raj Jurisprudence
Fifth Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	28th and 29th October, 2004	Srinagar	Annual Reports on the State of the Panchayats (including preparation of a Devolution Index)

Meetings	Invitees	Date	Location	Details of decisions/ discussions in these meetings
Sixth Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	27th and 28th November, 2004	Guwahati	Panchayati Raj elections and audits
Seventh Round Table	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	17th, 18th and 19th December, 2004	Jaipur	Capacity building and training of Panchayati Raj Institutions, IT enabled e-Governance for Panchayats
First Meeting of Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	5th and 6th August, 2005	Kochi, Kerala	Progress on activity mapping was reviewed. A joint statement of conclusion was signed at the end of the meeting regarding fixation of milestones in activity mapping, training programmes for Panchayat representatives as well as officials of line departments to sensitize them to the scope and implications of devolution, creation of Panchayat Sector in State mapping, training mapping, training mapping, training Budgets to operationalise the transfer of schemes to Panchayats by 2006-2007
Second Meeting of Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj	Ministers of Panchayati Raj of the Union and State/UTs	15th and 16th June, 2006	Bhubaneswar	In this Meeting the main focus was on Decentralised Planning. The participating Ministers indicated the implementation Status in their respective states on Activity Mapping, Creation of Panchayat Sector in State Budgets, fiscal devolution and Constitution of District Planning Committees.

(c) The performance across the States in taking appropriate measures for streamlining and empowering the Panchayati Raj Institutions for implementation of the decisions taken during these meetings has been uneven. The Council of Ministers of Panchayati Raj in their second

meeting at Bhubaneswar observed that in many States, the preliminary task of Activity Mapping across the three levels of Panchayats has been completed, however progress across States in the constitution of District Planning Committees has been uneven and somewhat slow. With a view to interacting with Panchayats and carrying out a review with authorities concerned of the progress in implementing the points for action mutually agreed to in the Round Tables, a process of visiting the States and UTs at the level of Union Minister for Panchayati Raj has been initiated. Fourteen States and two Union Territories have been covered so far, including Karnataka, West Bengal, Uttaranchal, Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Orissa, Arunachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Goa, Sikkim, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Chandigarh. Each visit is concluded with a Statement of Conclusions jointly signed with the Chief Minister of the State concerned, laying out the points of action on which the State would move to operationalise the recommendations of the Round Tables. Most of these action points revolve around follow up measures on activity mapping, matching transfer of funds and functionaries, creation of Panchayat sector in the State budget, constitution and operational guidelines for District Planning Committees within an agreed time-frame.

(d) Most of the States are yet to transfer functions, funds and functionaries to Panchayati Raj Institutions. Chhattisgarh is yet to finalize activity mapping exercises assigning activities to the three levels of Panchayats. However, the State has informed that it has devolved administrative control of functionaries in respect of ten departments to Panchayats. The Panchayats have also recruited 30,000 teachers for schools at the level of Panchayats. The State has also constituted District Planning Committees. Some progress has, therefore, been made towards institutionalization of Panchayati Raj System in Chhattisgarh.

Reserved candidates under General Category

1711. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that in the last Civil Service Examination 214 seats out of total 425 fell under general open merit seats and whether out of the 214 seat under general merit pool 50 candidates belonged to reserved categories (SC/ST/OBC etc.);